

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 CIEP-03 DRC-01

/114 W

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R 210718Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3598

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4757

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IS

SUBJ: PROTEST AGAINST EMPLOYMENT OF ARAB WORKERS IN
ISRAEL

1. SUMMARY. RECENT DEMONSTRATION BY DISCHARGED JEWISH
TEXTILE WORKERS IN DIMONA, PROTESTING AGAINST CONTINUED EMPLOYE-
MENT OF ARAB WORKERS FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, UNDERSCORES
POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OVER ARAB EMPLOYMENT SHOULD ISRAELI
ECONOMY, AS RESULT VARIOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS, ENCOUNTER
GROWING POCKETS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN AREAS WHERE ARAB WORKERS
ARE EMPLOYED IN LARGE NUMBERS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING LAY-OFF LAST WEEK OF SOME 300 JEWISH WORKERS
BY DIMONA FIBRES TEXTILE PLANT DUE TO UNECONOMICAL OPERATIONS
IN DEPARTMENTS HANDLING TEXTURIZED POLYESTER YARNS, ITS 800
JEWISH EMPLOYEES AUGUST 18 STAGED DEMONSTRATIONS, WIDELY REPORTED
IN PRESS AND TELEVISION, DEMANDING DISMISSAL OF ARABS FROM
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES EMPLOYED BY COMPANY. DUE TO TENSIONS
AND POTENTIAL VIOLENCE, COMPANY PLACED ITS 120 ARAB WORKERS
ON TEMPORARY LEAVE, PENDING RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM BY SENIOR
GOVERNMENT, HISTADRUT AND MENAGEMENT OFFICIALS.

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3. LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF AUG 20 THAT HE REGRETTED BEHAVIOR OF JEWISH WORKERS, DESCRIBING IT AS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO LAY-OFFS. HE STRESSED THAT ARAB WORKERS ARE DOING UNSKILLED JOBS AT COMPANY AND ARE NOT IN DIRECT JOB COMPETITION WITH JEWISH WORKERS AFFECTED BY LAY-OFFS. WHILE A FEW SIMILAR SITUATIONS HAVE OCCURRED IN PAST YEARS, THEY HAVE BEEN READILY RESOLVED DUE TO EASE OF FINDING ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT AND FACT THAT ARAB WORKERS HAD NOT BEEN EMPLOYED FOR LONG PERIODS. WHILE PROBLEM IN DIMONA IS MOST SERIOUS TO DATE, LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL BELIEVED IT WILL SOON SETTLE DOWN.

4. MEANWHILE, HISTADRUT AUGUST 18, IN CONSIDERATION PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH BRANCHES IN WEST BANK, ISSUED STATEMENT ESSENTIALLY CONFIRMING THAT WORKERS FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES EMPLOYED IN ISRAEL MUST ENJOY SAME WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL BENEFITS ENJOYED BY ISRAELI WORKERS. FURTHER DISCUSSION RE ESTABLISHMENT HISTADRUT BRANCHES IN WEST BANK DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER HISTADRUT CONSULTATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, HISTADRUT STATEMENT ON EQUAL RIGHTS APPARENTLY CLASHES WITH DEMAND OF JEWISH WORKERS IN DIMONA TO FIRE ARABS IN FAVOR OF JEWS.

5. COMMENT. DIMONA SITUATION UNDERSCORES PROBLEM WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED BY GOI AND HISTADRUT WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT DUE TO VARIETY OF REASONS OCCURS IN CERTAIN SECTORS OF ECONOMY WHERE LARGE NUMBERS OF ARABS ARE EMPLOYED, SUCH AS CONSTRUCTION AND TEXTILES. WHILE ARABS GENERALLY ARE PERFORMING UNSKILLED WORK, IT IS LIKELY THAT DISPLACED JEWISH WORKERS, EVEN IN MORE SKILLED JOBS, WILL PROTEST CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT OF ARABS FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WHILE JEWS ARE BEING DISCHARGED. WITH ISRAEL STILL FACING SERIOUS LABOR SHORTAGES, THIS PROBLEM WILL MOST LIKELY DEVELOP IN LIMITED SITUATIONS, AND SHOULD BE READILY RESOLVED AS LONG AS ISRAEL ENJOYS FULL EMPLOYMENT. HOWEVER, PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AT DIMONA EVOKED WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY IN ISRAEL AND MAY BE UTILIZED IN ARAB WORLD AS EVIDENCE OF DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF ARAB WORKERS BY ISRAELIS, PARTICULARLY IF GOI AND HISTADRUT DO INDEED UNDER PRESSURE CONCEDE TO DISPLACING SOME ARABS WITH JEWISH WORKERS.

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